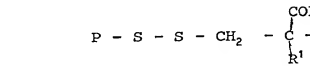
WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A compound of general formula VI



VI

in which P is selected from the group consisting of peptides, proteins and oligonucleotides; R^1 is hydrogen, lower alkyl or aryl; R^2 is a lipid-containing moiety comprising a lipid group; and R^3 is -OH, a lipid-containing moiety comprising a lipid group or an amino acid chain comprising one or 2 amino acids and terminating in $-CO_2H$ or $-COR^2$.

2. A compound according to claim 1, wherein R^1 is hydrogen, R^2 is a lipid group and R^3 is -OH.

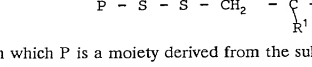
3. A compound according to claim 1, wherein R^1 is hydrogen, R^2 is $-CH_2CH_2CH(NH_2)CO_2H$ or $-CH_2CH_2CH(NHCO\text{-lipid})CO\text{-lipid}$ and R^3 is $-NHCH_2CO_2H$ or $-NHCH_2CO\text{-lipid}$ in which at least one of R^2 and R^3 comprises a lipid group.

4. A compound according to claim 1, wherein said lipid group is a hydrophobic substituent comprising about 4 to about 26 carbon atoms.

5. A compound according to claim 4, wherein said lipid group is a hydrophobic substituent comprising about 5 to about 19 carbon atoms.

6. A method for increasing absorption of a sulfhydryl-group containing compound selected from the group consisting of peptides, proteins and oligonucleotides into mammalian cells, said method comprising:

forming from the sulfhydryl-containing compound a compound of general formula VI



VI

in which P is a moiety derived from the sulfhydryl-group containing compound selected from the group consisting of peptides, proteins and oligonucleotides; R^1 is hydrogen, lower alkyl or aryl; R^2 is a lipid-containing moiety; and R^3 is -OH, a lipid-containing moiety or an amino acid chain comprising one or 2

amino acids and terminating in $-CO_2H$ or $-COR^2$; and

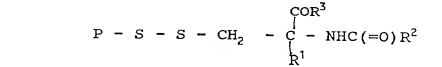
administering the compound of general formula VI to the cells.

7. A method according to claim 6, wherein R^1 is hydrogen, R^2 is a lipid group and R^3 is -OH.

8. A method according to claim 6, wherein R^1 is hydrogen, R^2 is $-CH_2CH_2CH(NH_2)CO_2H$ or $-CH_2CH_2CH(NHCO\text{-lipid})CO\text{-lipid}$ and R^3 is $-NHCH_2CO_2H$ or $-NHCH_2CO\text{-lipid}$ in which at least one of R^2 and R^3 comprises a lipid group.

9. A method for prolonging blood and tissue retention of a sulfhydryl-group containing compound selected from the group consisting of peptides, proteins and oligonucleotides into mammalian cells, said method comprising:

forming from the sulfhydryl-containing compound a compound of general formula VI



VI

in which P is selected from the group consisting of peptides, proteins and oligonucleotides; R^1 is hydrogen, lower alkyl or aryl; R^2 is a lipid-containing moiety; and R^3 is -OH, a lipid-containing moiety or an amino acid chain comprising one or 2 amino acids and terminating in $-CO_2H$ or $-COR^2$; and

administering the compound of general formula VI to the cells.

10. A method according to claim 9, wherein R^1 is hydrogen, R^2 is a lipid group and R^3 is -OH.

11. A method according to claim 9, wherein R^1 is hydrogen, R^2 is $-CH_2CH_2CH(NH_2)CO_2H$ or $-CH_2CH_2CH(NHCO\text{-lipid})CO\text{-lipid}$ and R^3 is $-NHCH_2CO_2H$ or $-NHCH_2CO\text{-lipid}$ in which at least one of R^2 and R^3 comprises a lipid group.

12. A compound of general formula V

V

in which A is an aromatic activating residue; R^1 is hydrogen, lower alkyl or aryl; R^2 is a lipid-containing moiety comprising a lipid group; and R^3 is -OH, a lipid-containing moiety comprising a lipid group or an amino acid chain comprising

one or 2 amino acids and terminating in $-CO_2H$ or $-COR^2$.

13. A compound according to claim 12, wherein A is 2-pyridyl or 4-nitrophenyl.

14. A compound according to claim 12, wherein R^1 is hydrogen, R^2 is a lipid group and R^3 is -OH.

15. A compound according to claim 12, wherein R^1 is hydrogen, R^2 is $-CH_2CH_2CH(NH_2)CO_2H$ or $-CH_2CH_2CH(NHCO\text{-lipid})CO\text{-lipid}$ and R^3 is $-NHCH_2CO_2H$ or $-NHCH_2CO\text{-lipid}$ in which at least one of R^2 and R^3 comprises a lipid group.

16. A method for a forming a compound of general formula VI, comprising: reacting a compound of general formula PSH, in which P is selected from the group consisting of peptides, proteins and oligonucleotides, with a compound of general formula V

$$A - S - S - CH_2 - CR^1(NHCOR^2)C(=O)R^3 \qquad V$$

in which A is an aromatic activating residue; R^1 is hydrogen, lower alkyl or aryl; R^2 is a lipid-containing moiety comprising a lipid group; and R^3 is -OH, a lipid-containing moiety comprising a lipid group or an amino acid chain comprising one or 2 amino acids and terminating in $-CO_2H$ or $-COR^2$.

17. A method according to claim 16, wherein A is 2-pyridyl or 4-nitrophenyl.

18. A method according to claim 16, wherein R^1 is hydrogen, R^2 is a lipid group and R^3 is -OH.

19. A method according to claim 16, wherein R^1 is hydrogen, R^2 is $-CH_2CH_2CH(NH_2)CO_2H$ or $-CH_2CH_2CH(NHCO\text{-lipid})CO\text{-lipid}$ and R^3 is $-NHCH_2CO_2H$ or $-NHCH_2CO\text{-lipid}$ in which at least one of R^2 and R^3 comprises a lipid group.

20. A compound of general formula III

$$A - S - S - CH_2 - CR^1(NH_2)C(=O)R^{3'} \qquad III$$

in which $R^{3'}$ is -OH or an amino acid chain comprising one or two amino acids and terminating in $-CO_2H$; A is an aromatic activating residue; and R^1 is hydrogen, lower alkyl or aryl.

21. A compound according to claim 20, wherein R^1 is hydrogen and R^3 is -OH.

22. A compound according to claim 20, wherein R^1 is hydrogen and R^3 is -$NHCH_2CO_2H$.